

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 DHA-02 IO-11 OMB-01 /074 W

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R 181415Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9638

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDEREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0419

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CZ

SUBJECT: HUSAK ATTACK ON DISSIDENTS

1. IN FEBRUARY 14 ADDRESS TO "HIS DISTRICT'S" (PRAGUE 9) PARTY
CONFERENCE, PRESIDENT AND KSC GENERAL SECRETARY HUSAK STRONGLY

ATTACKED "INDIVIDUALS OR SMALL GROUPS...WHO COULD NOT BECOME
RECONCILED TO FACT THAT WE HAVE PUT AN END TO NATIONALIST AND
REVISIONIST SLOGANS." NOTING THAT, AS XVTH PARTY CONGRESS
APPROACHES, "OVERSHELMING MAJORITY" OF CITIZENS, INCLUDING MANY
OF THOSE OUSTED AFTER 1968, SUPPORT KSC POLICY, HUSAK DESCRIBED
DISSIDENTS AS "FORGOTTEN" AND AS ESSENTIALLY UNIMPORTANT, EXCEPT
AS THEY ARE USED BY WESTERN REACTIONARY PROPAGANDA. IN
POTENTIALLY OMINOUS PHRASING, HUSAK SAID THAT "THESE GROUPS
WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER THEIR CONDUCT AND THINK ABOUT THEIR
ATTITUDE TO RESPECT FOR CZECHOSLOVAK LAWS AS WELL AS THE
POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING THEM." NOTING THAT THE
YIRUGGLE WAGED IN RECENT YEARS WAS "A POLITICAL BATTLE",
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HUSAK WARNED THAT "SOCIALIST SOCIETY DOES NOT REFRAIN FROM

THE USE OF OTHER MEANS" IF ITS BASIC VALUES AND ACHIEVEMENTS
ARE THREATENED.

2. THIS ATTACK, COMING IN THE WAKE OF FULL PUBLICITY GIVEN
TO CAPTAIN MINARIK'S ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING RFC CONTACTS
WITH NAMED CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS, HAS LED MANY OBSERVERS
HERE TO SPECULATE THAT STAGE IS BEING SET FOR PROSECUTION OF
DISSIDENTS. WHILE WE AGREE THAT HUSAK'S SPEECH MUST
CERTAINLY GIVE DISSIDENTS PAUSE, WE DOUBT THAT ANY DECISION
TO ENGAGE IN "SHOW TRIALS" HAS BEEN TAKEN. FIRST, WHILE
WARNINGS OF POTENTIAL PROSECUTION ARE DISTURBING, WE NOTE
THAT IN HIS APRIL 1975 BLAST AT DUBCEK
HUSAK ALSO WARNED
THAT "EFFECTS OF BREAKING THE LAW APPLY TO BOTH HIMSELF AND
HIS KIND IN THE SAME MEASURE AS TO ANYBODY ELSE." SECOND,
WHILE THERE ARE NO DOUBT MANY HARDLINERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO
SEE SOME RETRIBUTION VISITED UPON THE DISSIDENTS, WE DO NOT
BELIEVE THAT HUSAK HIMSELF IS SO OBTUSE AS NOT TO REALIZE
THE EXTENT TO WHICH SHOW TRIALS WOULD UNDERMINE THE RELATIVELY
SUCCESSFUL JOB WHICH HE AND HIS REGIME HAVE DONE IN OVER-
COMING THE PARIAH STATUS IMPOSED AFTER THE EVENTS OF 1968-69.
(NOR DO WE THINK HE IS SO WEAK AS TO BE UNABLE TO CARRY THIS
VIEW AGAINST HIS OPPONENTS.) FINALLY WE FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE
THAT THE SOVIETS--WHOSE ACQUIESCENCE WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE
REQUIRED BEFORE ANY SUCH TRIALS WOULD BE HELD--WOULD WISH
TO SEE THE "CZECHOSLOVAK QUESTION" BROUGHT TO THE FORE ONCE
AGAIN. THUS, WE ARE INCLINED TO VIEW THIS MOST RECENT
ATTACK AS ESSENTIALLY A BONE THROWN TO THE PARTY HARDLINERS
PRIOR TO THE APRIL CONGRESS, WITH ANY DAMPENING EFFECT
WHICH IT MAY HAVE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DISSIDENTS A WEL-
COME BONUS. OUR BRITISH COLLEAGUES, AT LEAST, TEND TO
SHARE THIS VIEW.
FRISBIE

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